

## THE CAUSES AND DYNAMICS OF CONFLICT IN SUB- SAHARAN AFRICA

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL ARTHUR T. MOE  
United States Army Reserve

### DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A:

Approved for Public Release.  
Distribution is Unlimited.

USAWC CLASS OF 2009

This PRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.



U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050

The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle State Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. <b>PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.</b>					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 10-05-2009		2. REPORT TYPE Program Research Paper		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE  The Causes and Dynamics of Conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)  LTC Arthur T. Moe				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)  U.S. Army War College 122 Forbes Avenue Carlisle, PA 17013				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)  COL Allen D. Raymond Department of Distance Education				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT  DISTRIBUTION A: Unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT Pervasive conflict throughout much of Sub-Saharan Africa defies easy resolution due to a unique web of factors. Poor governance, ethnic rivalry, mismanagement of land and natural resources, declining economic conditions, and widespread poverty and famine form a daunting bulwark against stability. In recent centuries, much of the western world rose above these destabilizing factors because of socio-political-economic stability gained from two trends: the spread of constitutional democracy and economic globalization. Two major occurrences, colonialism and the cold war, prevented Sub-Saharan states from following these two trends. The disruption in sovereignty caused by colonialism, which was then followed by hastily formed governments during the cold war, spawned conditions of corruption, scarcity, and violent competition. These conditions make it difficult for African states to achieve lasting stability and advance economically. As a result any stability gained is often fleeting; conflict remains inevitable. To improve stability in Africa the U.S. and other nations must implement policies that correct the long-term effects of colonialism and the cold war.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Governance, ethnicity, civil war, poverty, corruption, peace building					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT	b. ABSTRACT	c. THIS PAGE			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code)
UNCLASSIFIED	UNCLASSIFIED	UNCLASSIFIED	UNLIMITED	30	

USAWC PROGRAM RESEARCH PROJECT

**THE CAUSES AND DYNAMICS OF CONFLICT IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

by

Lieutenant Colonel Arthur T. Moe  
United States Army Reserve

Topic Approved By  
Colonel Allen D. Raymond

This PRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

U.S. Army War College  
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

## **ABSTRACT**

AUTHOR: Lieutenant Colonel Arthur T. Moe  
TITLE: The Causes and Dynamics of Conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa  
FORMAT: Program Research Project  
DATE: 10 May 2009      WORD COUNT: 5,027      PAGES: 30  
KEY TERMS: Governance, ethnicity, civil war, poverty, corruption, peace building  
CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

Pervasive conflict throughout much of Sub-Saharan Africa defies easy resolution due to a unique web of factors. Poor governance, ethnic rivalry, mismanagement of land and natural resources, declining economic conditions, and widespread poverty and famine form a daunting bulwark against stability. In recent centuries, much of the western world rose above these destabilizing factors because of socio-political-economic stability gained from two trends: the spread of constitutional democracy and economic globalization. Two major occurrences, colonialism and the cold war, prevented Sub-Saharan states from following these two trends. The disruption in sovereignty caused by colonialism, which was then followed by hastily formed governments during the cold war, spawned conditions of corruption, scarcity, and violent competition. These conditions make it difficult for African states to achieve lasting stability and advance economically. As a result any stability gained is often fleeting; conflict remains inevitable. To improve stability in Africa the U.S. and other nations must implement policies that correct the long-term effects of colonialism and the cold war.

## THE CAUSES AND DYNAMICS OF CONFLICT IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Sub-Saharan Africa is a vast land rich in natural resources with great potential for investment and opportunity. However, the two modern trends of democracy and economic prosperity elude this region due in large part to persistent conflict and complex socio-political dynamics. The causes are rooted in the peculiar effects colonialism and the cold war had on Sub-Saharan Africa. Policies enacted during those eras promoted conditions of corruption, scarcity, and violent competition. The dynamics of conflict and strife run counter to western intuition and repeatedly stymie international efforts. Unstable conditions linger that leave Africa vulnerable to influences and actions from organizations such as terrorist networks that oppose U.S. interests. A stable, peaceful, and self-sustaining continent is in the best interest of both the U.S. and Africa.

### Past Policy Legacy

Western nations colonized Africa extensively from about the 1880s to the start of World War I. In 1884, Berlin hosted a conference for the purpose of creating rules for dividing Africa; European nations hurried to secure a share of the land in what became known as the "Scramble for Africa." Colonial powers established boundaries around claimed territories, thereby artificially grouping and separating various ethnic groups.<sup>1</sup> Colonial powers then established administrative and civic structures designed to maintain order and achieve profitability for colonial powers. In the pursuit of their own interests, colonial rulers did little to establish systems and institutions of local governance and finance until about 1940.<sup>2</sup> For example, the British implemented a "divide and rule" policy during their colonial period in order to achieve administrative efficiencies and support local order. Unfortunately, this practice, which put one ethnic

group against another, introduced frailty to the civic order. The situation began to deteriorate when the British pulled out.

The impacts of these colonial policies vary widely around the world. Kaplan observes that some former colonies such as “Botswana, Chile, and Costa Rica” had colonial borders that “left them relatively homogeneous.”<sup>3</sup> These states developed strong national identities, stability, and a measure of prosperity. India especially benefited from colonial rule. Britain invested heavily in Indian infrastructure and institutions over a long enough period that India gained a strong sense of national identity and socio-political soundness.

However, that did not happen in most of Sub-Saharan Africa. Few former African colonies received such attention as India; few developed strong national identities needed for stability and democracy. These states of diverse ethnic composition failed to attain cultural integrity and social cohesion.

Independence came abruptly to African states. With little experience in modern self-governance democracy failed to take root. Instead, influential figures assumed or seized power and implemented measures to retain power rather than establish good governance. Angola is a good example. This nation abruptly gained independence from Portugal in 1975. Shortly thereafter a long-lasting civil war broke out, causing the deaths of hundreds of thousands. Because of the civil war, the Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the ruling faction in Angola, devoted the next three decades to retaining centralized political control while neglecting to develop other branches of the government.<sup>4</sup>

Uganda is another example of the effects of colonial rule. There in 1894 Great Britain brought together several ethnic groups within one “arbitrary boundary” to establish the Uganda colony. To implement efficient administrative and civil control the British selected the Baganda people of the south Bantu region of Uganda to assist in governing the entire colony of Uganda. This created animosity between the Bantu peoples of the south and the Nilotic peoples of the north of Uganda,<sup>5</sup> an animosity that sparked two civil wars.

Similarly, the crisis in Darfur has its roots in British colonial rule. Though Darfur was independent prior to 1916, Britain annexed that region to Sudan. Afterward, both Britain and the subsequent independent government of Sudan neglected Darfur.<sup>6</sup>

As colonialism ended, the newly forming African states gained independence during the cold war. The two superpowers sought allies around the world; this included many of the newly independent African states. The United States and Soviet Union engaged each other via proxy wars thru client states in the developing world.<sup>7</sup> These proxy wars furthered superpower interests but, like colonialism, did little to help African states succeed at sovereignty and economic advancement.

U.S. interests in Africa focused primarily on two things: access to vital resources and countering its superpower rival, the Soviet Union.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, U.S. involvement in post-colonial Africa often involved selecting African allies because of their willingness to support U.S. interests in opposing Soviet influence, not because of the character of those states’ leaders or methods and quality of governance. Although this helped the U.S. win the cold war, it hindered Sub-Saharan Africa’s advancement. For example, the U.S. considered Zaire (Congo) central to its cold war efforts in Africa because Zaire



President Mobutu Sese Seko, though corrupt and often brutal to his opponents, opposed Marxism<sup>9</sup>

A temporary effect of cold war superpower rivalry was that it suppressed war and violence in the developing world.<sup>10</sup> However, as superpower funding to proxy states decreased after the cold war this effect lifted.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the shift in U.S. focus and the collapse of the Soviet Union may have contributed to the wave of violence that swept through Africa in the 1990s.<sup>12</sup>

### Conflict Sources

Many factors cause conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa, some direct, others indirect. A literature search indicates the following to be prominent direct or indirect causes: poor governance; ethnic rivalry; mismanagement of land and natural resources; declining economic conditions; poverty and famine.

#### *Poor Governance*

By far, the most important factor causing Africa's conflicts is poor governance. Ibrahim Elbadawi and Nicholas Sambanis conducted a rigorous empirical study to determine the cause of civil wars in Africa. They find that Africa's dearth of democratic institutions is one of four significant factors causing civil war in Africa.<sup>13</sup>

One reason achieving democracy in Africa has been difficult is timing. For many African nations, independence came during the 1960s. The global economic after-effects of World War II combined with cold war rivalry had changed the political and economic landscape in the world. The former world powers determined colonialism no longer suited their interests and rapidly decolonized.

For the most part, the colonial powers did little to prepare their colonies for independence.<sup>14</sup> Colonial powers pulled out, leaving artificial political borders but few

mechanisms for sovereign governance. Most former colonies lacked the institutions and experience needed for democratic rule. Competing political interests and issues divided states along ethnic lines. Eventually, authoritarian rule came to dominate in much of Africa. Seeking to retain political power, these new rulers built strong central state structures, police, and militaries to help them retain power.<sup>15</sup> They devoted little toward developing other essential institutions of governance and finance.

Corrupt practices then became the norm. Ruling parties held a monopoly on revenue and expenditure. To gain political loyalty across ethnic lines, autocratic rulers established patron-client networks<sup>16</sup> and, as was the case with Angola, African rulers have been and still are notorious for self-serving practices, showing favoritism to select groups at the expense of the needs of other groups.<sup>17</sup> Further illustrating this, the Transparency International 2008 Corruption Perceptions Index shows that of 47 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, 30 are perceived to have rampant corruption.<sup>18</sup> This is in spite of the several anti-corruption institutions that have arisen in Sub-Saharan Africa over the past two decades.

Corruption has severe consequences: it generates social unrest; suppresses economic development, and hinders or prevents the establishment of government and financial institutions needed for stability and growth.<sup>19</sup> Liberia's second civil war in 2003 arose from poor governance. Although President Charles Taylor had been elected to office by a majority, he failed to democratically reunite Liberia in the aftermath of the first Liberian civil war.<sup>20</sup> Instead, he focused efforts on retaining power, repressing others in the process.

Mauritania's efforts in 2007 and 2008 illustrate the difficulty of establishing democracy in Africa. Mauritania endeavored to establish its first democratic governance since gaining independence from France in 1960. The military regime then ruling had agreed to a peaceful transfer of power. This did not happen, however. While the new democratic government was forming, the military worked secretly to regain power. On August 6, 2008, they arrested President Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahi thus returning the state to autocratic control.<sup>21</sup>

Fortunately, anti-corruption strategies are in the works and some progress is encouraging. The World Bank is seeking to reduce corruption through two approaches.<sup>22</sup> The first is to eliminate the monopoly on finances by supporting the establishment of institutions for political and administrative accountability. The second is to change the "Norm" or accepted behavior. The results have been mixed.

The Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission (KACC) was formed in 1999 to pursue political accountability. However, Kenyan politicians have thwarted efforts to change the corruption norm and have successfully resisted politically accountability. Nigeria, on the other hand, has made some progress. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in Nigeria has enjoyed greater success at reducing corruption. It initiated investigations on 31 former governors suspected of corruption and has arrested three so far.<sup>23</sup>

Establishing sound financial institutions is also necessary to reduce corrupt governance. Semi-Autonomous Revenue Authorities (ARA) promise introducing greater fiscal accountability and are gaining acceptance in Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>24</sup>

Operating with a measure of autonomy, ARAs assume tax operations for the state, thereby mitigating opportunities for embezzlement.

### *Ethnic Rivalry*

Ethnic strife in Africa comes in many forms and has many causes. Artificial political borders and colonial favoritism set the conditions for ethnic rivalry in much of Africa. Poor governance makes matters worse. In the absence of national identity, people may identify with their ethnic group. This often happens when the government fails to address concerns such as security, property rights, poverty and famine.

Other colonial actions created ethnic strife. Decades ago in the Congo, Belgian colonialists relocated tens of thousands of Rwandan Hutu and Tutsis to sparsely populated Congo lands. Now, descendants of indigenous Congo tribes, the Nandes and Nyangas, contest the rights to these lands.<sup>25</sup> These issues contributed to the atrocities in the Congo where over 5 million people have died from conflict and violence.

Ethnic diversity also has lesser ills. Ibrahim Elbadawi and Nicholas Sambanis cite several effects such as “bad economic policy and slow growth.”<sup>26</sup> Such effects may indirectly lead to conflict by causing poor governance and economic conditions.

Surprisingly, though strife often occurs along ethnic lines, evidence indicates ethnicity itself is seldom the “root” cause of civil wars. Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler offer a remarkable insight. Their empirical analysis indicates that the level of “fractionalization” influences the likelihood of civil war. Societies fractionalized into many ethnic groups, or heterogeneous societies, are actually less likely to have civil war. Homogeneous societies are likewise less prone to civil war.<sup>27</sup> Ibrahim Elbadawi and Nicholas Sambanis confirm these findings. In their study of the causes of civil war

in Africa, they examined several factors to include ethnic diversity. They describe three levels of diversity. In homogenous societies, the population percentage of a single ethnic group approaches 100%. Polarized societies contain a dominant group of 40 to 60% of the population. Finally, heterogeneous societies contain many ethnic groups with no single group dominating. Their rigorous analysis shows that ethnic diversity actually helps deter civil war in Africa.<sup>28</sup> They suggest a reason for this: as heterogeneity increases, the variety of competing interests hampers rebel efforts to organize.

On the other hand, Elbadawi and Sambanis observe that conditions in ethnically polarized societies, those fractionalized into just a few groups, better favor rebel efforts to organize for civil war. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda gives a good example:

In the case of the Sudan, the black people lived together with the Arabs. However, some of the Arabs wanted to make the Africans [into] Arabs, and that was a very big issue. That has caused all of the problems you must have heard of in the Sudan.<sup>29</sup>

Other aspects of ethnicity contributed to great atrocities and the death of millions during the first and second Congo Wars. Séverine Autesserre conducted extensive fieldwork interviewing more than 330 individuals in the aftermath of the Second Congo War (1998-2003). He selected interviewees representing a wide variety of interests in the Congo. He determined much of the long-lasting brutal violence involved local-level issues among various ethnic groups, rather than national or regional issues. Issues ranged from disputes over control of political influence, mineral rights, and other resources. For example, one specific source of conflict was a polarized dispute between the Rwandophones and the Nandes over rightful claims to land.<sup>30</sup>

Ethnic strife often forces large numbers of people to flee areas of violence to seek refuge elsewhere. When this involves crossing state borders it becomes what Jacob Bercovitch refers to as “internationalized ethnic conflict.”<sup>31</sup> He observes such incidents can be “very violent and protracted.”<sup>32</sup> The atrocities spawning the “Great Lakes refugee crisis” of 1994 involving the Rwanda genocide when millions of Rwandan’s fled to the Congo for refuge represent this type of ethnic conflict.<sup>33</sup> The bipolar ethnic strife in Rwanda helped trigger the First Congo war of 1996-1997.

Resolving internationalized ethnic conflict is “difficult and complex.”<sup>34</sup> Bercovitch analyzed the effectiveness of three techniques employed to resolve internationalized ethnic conflicts: coercion, negotiation, and mediation. Though effective less than half the time, he determined mediation is the most popular and the most effective of the three.<sup>35</sup>

The duration and degree of hostility directly determines the time, resources, and assistance needed to fully resolve differences and restore lasting peace.<sup>36</sup> The brutality and abuses often associated with ethnic strife generate bitterness, resentment, and prejudice that can last for generations. Consequently, efforts to sustain peace after ethnic warfare often fail.<sup>37</sup> Political and civic leaders would do well to minimize the conditions that can lead to ethnic strife.

#### *Mismanagement of Land and Natural Resources*

Unlike developed nations, land is important to most Africans for food security and survival.<sup>38</sup> Consequently, land disputes and property rights are factors in many African conflicts. Many such disputes have roots in colonial policies and activities such as artificial colonial boundaries, colonial relocation of Africans, and pre-colonial disputes.

Land is also important for access to natural resources. Warring factions seize land to gain access to minerals and cash crops.<sup>39</sup> These become revenue sources to support their interests and objectives.<sup>40</sup> The grab for land often continues well into the peace implementation process.<sup>41</sup>

The blessing of rich natural resources has other ill effects. Abundant natural resources sustain political corruption,<sup>42</sup> which creates conditions favorable to violence. Peter J. Boettke, et al, studied disaster recovery in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. They analyzed economic development literature to draw a useful observation that may also apply to recurring conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa. They determined abundant natural resources and foreign aid could actually increase or sustain corruption.<sup>43</sup> Empirical evidence confirms that the degree of natural resources availability is correlated with likelihood of conflict. Government dependence on natural resources for revenue likewise tends to increase the risk of war<sup>44</sup> and thwart peacebuilding.<sup>45</sup> Collier and Hoeffler refine this somewhat. In their analysis of the economic causes of civil war, they determined that control of natural resources increased substantially the risk of civil war, but only up to a certain point. After reaching a higher level, the risk of civil war declined.<sup>46</sup>

Natural resource abundance also discourages governments from developing their economies. Further, economies that are too dependent on natural resources remain fragile and suffer greatly from market fluctuations. The provision of foreign aid or acquisition of natural resources, both of which are very common in Africa, could have unintended consequences that sustain the cycles of corruption and violence.

### *Declining Economic Conditions*

Severe economic difficulties plague Sub-Saharan Africa and form an important “root cause” of many of Africa’s problems.<sup>47</sup> Past colonial and cold war activities in Africa generated interest primarily in extraction rather than production.<sup>48</sup> This negative effect still persists in current trade interests and hampers economic growth.<sup>49</sup> With a population now exceeding 800 million, Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for 12 percent of the world’s population. However, nearly 65 percent of Africans depend on agriculture as their primary source of livelihood. Smallholder farmers account for more than 90 percent of agricultural production. More than 40 percent of the people live on less than \$1 a day.<sup>50</sup>

Sub-Saharan Africa’s low per capita income rate puts it at great risk for conflict. Collier and Hoeffler developed an elegant model to study the “economic causes of civil war.” They determined that greater per capita incomes lower the risk of civil war.”<sup>51</sup>

Confirming this finding is research showing that Asian countries experienced a 35% reduced risk of civil war, in part due to improved economies over the past two decades.<sup>52</sup> Asian countries enjoyed improved economies and reduced conflict, in part due to globalization. Yet the benefits of globalization have by-passed Sub-Saharan Africa to a great extent. Poor infrastructure and security issues limit ability to engage in global commerce.

In addition, regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa, which get the majority of their energy from oil, suffer immensely from oil price sensitivity. A World Bank estimate indicates the rising oil prices of 2007-2008 increased poverty six percent in some



countries.<sup>53</sup> Oil price fluctuations generate other strains in Africa such as the perception that only the elite benefits from oil revenues, thereby “fueling” insurgencies.

Fortunately, the recent global economic downturn has had little impact on developing countries because of minimal exposure to financial investment risks.<sup>54</sup> However, such resiliency may not last if the economic downturn persists.

In view of Sub-Saharan Africa’s dire circumstances, developed nations seem compelled to furnish foreign aid to developing states. Charitable giving tends to surge in response to crises. While foreign aid is important for debt relief and other vital purposes, it does have its down side. As mentioned earlier, foreign aid might actually inhibit economic development and self-sustainment.<sup>55</sup>

Corrupt regimes abuse foreign aid, using it for favoritism and to secure political power. For foreign aid to be effective, measures must be taken to ensure funds are used as intended. Additionally, aid money is often diverted and used for the acquisition of arms and ammunition.<sup>56</sup> As Boettke, et al, determined in their Katrina study, aid recipients often spend the money improperly. Such governmental corruption interferes with economic growth.<sup>57</sup> Kaplan stresses the importance of urging governments to strengthen their self-reliance through efforts such as negotiating tax rates with corporations and local companies.<sup>58</sup>

The empirical evidence presented here indicates ‘development’ rather than ‘emergency relief’ would generate greater benefits over the long run. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development confirms this reporting that growth comes from increasing productivity and capacity. Foreign direct investment (FDI) and private loans are better suited for this purpose.<sup>59</sup>

Unfortunately, conditions in much of Africa do not favor FDI. Progress in regulatory and institutional reform and improvements in infrastructure, energy availability, and good governance would make Sub-Saharan Africa more attractive for investment.<sup>60</sup>

### *Poverty and Famine*

The daunting economic challenges left over from past policy legacies make it difficult for Africa to reduce poverty, which, along with famine are key causes of conflict in Africa.<sup>61</sup> Ibrahim Elbadawi and Nicholas Sambanis explain the reason for this. As poverty increases, the “economic opportunity costs” of civil war decreases. In other words, the more individuals have to lose, the less likely they will risk joining a conflict. Property rights and land scarcity issues play into this heavily, as so many Africans rely greatly on agriculture.

Sharp increases in oil prices in recent years prompted increased biofuel production. This put inflationary pressure on food prices, causing prices to increase by about 15% in 2007, a huge burden for low-income states. The impact on Africa was mixed: agricultural producers benefited from price increases<sup>62</sup> while non-agricultural workers, primarily in urban areas, suffered.<sup>63</sup> Rising food prices can cause social unrest even in relatively stable nations, as evidenced by Senegal’s instability and rioting in 2007.<sup>64</sup>

Food production is subject to several risks. Factors such as environmental degradation, conflict, and climate can reduce productivity substantially.<sup>65</sup> In addition, warring elements intercept food relief shipments.<sup>66</sup> As so many Africans depend directly

on locally raised food, droughts or other catastrophes can create famine, which exacerbates social unrest.

### Conflict Mechanisms and Dynamics

In addition to direct and indirect causes, certain mechanisms and dynamics also influence the occurrence and nature of conflict. Considered here are social cohesion, local factors, and the peacebuilding triangle.

#### *Social Cohesion*

In a rigorous analysis, Seth Kaplan examines what he describes as a “fundamental force” necessary for development.<sup>67</sup> He calls it social cohesion. This force is what enabled some heterogeneous countries with multiple cultures and ethnic groups, such as India, to unify around a national identity. The reason is cohesive groups build effective systems needed for stability and security.<sup>68</sup>

The cohesion needed to advance is possible when the people have something in common, something shared to identify with. Evidence around the globe supports this. In the aftermath of World War II, Germany and Japan quickly recovered in part because of shared national heritage. Likewise, developing nations such as South Korea, Chile, Turkey, and Vietnam that share common language and culture experience relative stability. Peoples with no common national identity tend to have problems cooperating, like so many African states.<sup>69</sup> This is a difficult problem to resolve.<sup>70</sup>

Kaplan cautions that key actors are skeptical of this dynamic. Financial institutions and economists, for example, who as a group are very influential in development, are reluctant to consider that social aspects of a society can override the implementation of sound administration and economic policies as the driving force.

### *Local Factors*

As of result of his extensive research, Autesserre observed an important yet overlooked catalyst of conflict. Local factors caused much of the bloodshed and violence in the two Congo wars. By “local” Autesserre is referring to levels such as the individual, family, and community.<sup>71</sup> Such local factors include disputes over land, resources, and power.<sup>72</sup>

Unfortunately, international peace workers in the Congo overlooked local issues while trying to resolve the conflict at the regional and state levels. In 2003, after reaching a peace settlement, foreign forces decreased substantially and peacekeeping forces pulled out. The Congo was considered to be in the “post-conflict stage.” International efforts to restore order to the Congo caused peace workers to turn their focus to elections and, as a result, they overlooked the local dynamics that festered in the background.

Yet, large-scale unrest and violence continued at the local level in the provinces of North and South Kivu and Katanga. Overlooked were the “longstanding bottom-up agendas” and “local strongmen accountable to no one but themselves.”<sup>73</sup> With the designation of “post-conflict” the status of Congo changed from “peace enforcement” to “peace keeping.” Peace workers who then deployed to that area were ill equipped to manage the intense violence that continued. Further, the change in status also changed the status of the sub-national actors. It was no longer “legal” for diplomats or the UN to negotiate with them. Doing so might legitimize them.<sup>74</sup> This further thwarted efforts to resolve the brutal conflict.

This is informative for policy makers, disaster relief workers, NGOs, and so forth. Traditional notions of sovereignty are being challenged by local level actors such as Laurent Nkunda, who led a rebel faction against the Congo Army in North Kivu. Honoring the letter of the law that precludes negotiating with rebels may have contributed to the unintended consequence of hundreds of thousands of deaths in eastern Congo. Given the magnitude of these atrocities, it would be worth reviewing the principles behind the laws to determine if updating the codes merit consideration.

### *Peacebuilding Triangle*

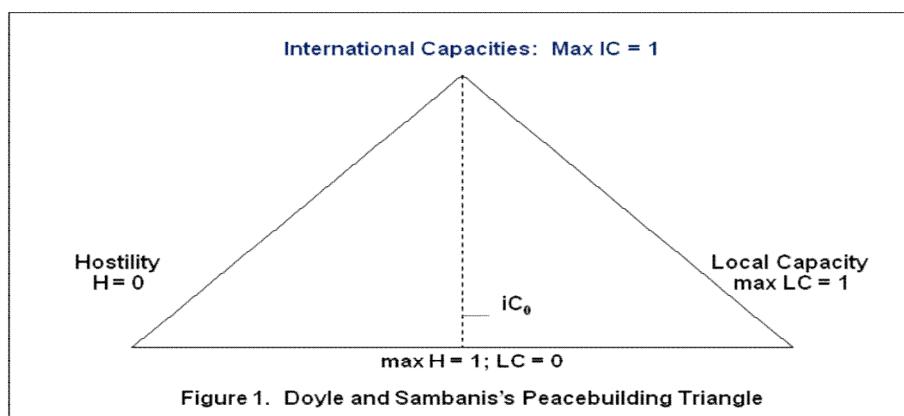
Michael W. Doyle of Columbia University & Nicholas Sambanis of Yale University examined the prerequisites for civil war and the dynamics of restoring stability after civil wars. Some of the conditions for civil war include governmental favoritism and disaffected citizens with the ability to organize and acquire resources.<sup>75</sup> Other conditions include: one or more groups within a society that perceive the central government cannot or will not fairly represent them or provide basic needs; the group is able to gain the resources and support needed for armed conflict; and the group expects the benefit (utility) of civil war will be greater than the expected advantage of not starting a civil war. Once antagonism starts, rational cooperation among the actors is not likely.<sup>76</sup> Once outside actors get involved by supporting one side, resolving civil wars is more difficult.<sup>77</sup>

Doyle and Sambanis propose a Peacebuilding Triangle<sup>78</sup> as a strategy model for planning peacebuilding (see Figure 1). The triangle represents the dynamic interaction among three variables essential for lasting peacebuilding success. These are:

- The degree of hostility.

- Remaining local capacities for conflict resolution.
- International assistance.

The triangle shape illustrates the model. Each of the three points represents a variable while the relationship among the variables creates the dynamic. The area within the triangle represents the capacity for peacebuilding; the greater the area, the greater the capacity for peace. Further, the variables act both *cooperatively* and *competitively* with each other. The two variables of 'local capacities' and 'international assistance' work cooperatively with each other. The 'degree of hostility remaining after a conflict,' on the other hand, competes with the other two variables. What this means is that the greater the hostility remaining after the conflict, the greater must be at least one of the other two variables, either local capacity for resolving conflict or international assistance.



Doyle and Sambanis tested their model by developing suitable hypotheses and then running their model through a series of trials. They conducted several rigorous quantitative analyses to examine 124 civil wars that occurred between 1944 and 1997. The results reveal that civil wars indeed vary in complexity. Though abstract, the results

do confirm the viability of their simple model. These theoretical findings can be very useful in informing peace practitioners and policy makers.

### Future Policy Recommendations

To advance U.S. interests, in addition to the Departments of Defense and State, the U.S. has other agencies, such as the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which advances U.S. foreign policy objectives by supporting: economic growth, agriculture and trade; global health; and democracy, conflict prevention and humanitarian assistance in five regions to include Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>79</sup>

The 2006 National Security Strategy expresses the following U.S. interests in Africa.<sup>80</sup>

- Improve liberty, peace, and stability and increase prosperity in Africa.
- Strengthen fragile and failing states and bring ungoverned areas under the control of effective democracies.
- Promote economic development, market reforms, effective democratic governance, and reduce corruption.
- Strengthen African nations' domestic capabilities and the regional capacity of the African Union.

The African Union (AU) is an intergovernmental organization established in 2002 to integrate continent-wide political economic and security interests. The AU program, New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), specializes in economic cooperation. To promote good governance AU programs include the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, and the African Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption. This relatively new network of intergovernmental organizations

is progressing in Africa to resolve issues still lingering from colonialism and the cold war. Because much of this complex structure is less than one decade old, many problems remain to be solved. The African Union will benefit greatly from international support.

Six appropriate U.S. policy initiatives may be derived from this research:

- Require accountability of foreign aid to ensure proper use, promote sound institutions such as ARAs, and assist in building infrastructure.
- Promote the strengthening of social cohesion and national identities.
- Implement policies that promote good governance and discourage corruption.

Specifically, the U.S. should avoid repeating cold war practices such as foregoing the support of cultivating good governance to achieve short-term Global War on Terrorism objectives.

- Implement policies that stabilize oil prices in order to minimize volatility.
- Encourage trade in agricultural products by promoting projects that improve infrastructure especially clean water facilities and roads.
- U.S. policies should also support the efforts and credibility of the AU.

Through its efforts, the AU is making slow but significant improvements in Africa.

In addition, the U.S. should conduct a financial policy review to find and correct weaknesses that could cause world-wide financial instability or adversely impact developing nations.



## Conclusion

A stable, productive Africa is important to U.S. interests. Colonial and cold war legacies still hinder Sub-Saharan Africa's ability to control conflict and advance economically. To recover from these legacies, Sub-Saharan Africa will need assistance in many forms from developed nations. Africa will also need time, as some problems such as ethnic rivalry can take years or generations to correct. The U.S. is still in a unique position to influence this situation while it remains the only superpower. During the current interim between superpower competition, the U.S. should take the opportunity to assist Africa to the mutual benefit of both. The example of the long-lasting benefits of Great Britain's investment in India can serve as a useful guide. By investing in institutions, infrastructure, and fostering a national identity, the U.S. can help build a stable region for more 800 million people.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Anup Shah, "Conflicts in Africa – Introduction," (January 03, 2009) linked from the *Global Issues Home Page* at "More articles," "Conflicts in Africa," "Africa – Introduction," <http://www.globalissues.org/article/84/conflicts-in-africa-introduction> (accessed April 18, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Ellis, "How to Rebuild Africa," *Foreign Affairs* 84, No. 5 (September/October 2005): in ProQuest (accessed March 31, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> Seth Kaplan, "Fixing Fragile States," *Policy Review* no. 152 (December 1, 2008): 67, in ProQuest (accessed April 29, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> Alex Vines, et al., "Angola, Drivers of change: an overview," (London: Chatham House, April 2005): 5, linked from the *Governance and Social Development Resource Centre Home Page* at "Drivers of change," at "Angola," <http://www.gsdr.org> (accessed May 01, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Fredrick Kisekka-Ntale, "Roots of the Conflict in Northern Uganda," *The Journal of Social, Political, and Economic Studies* 32, no. 4 (December 1, 2007): 425, in ProQuest (accessed May 01, 2009).

<sup>6</sup> Gerard Prunier, "The Politics of Death in Darfur," *Current History* 105, no. 691 (May 2006): 195.

<sup>7</sup> Jacob Bercovitch, "Managing Internationalized Ethnic Conflict," *World Affairs* 166, no. 1 (July 1, 2003): 56, in ProQuest (accessed April 20, 2009).

<sup>8</sup> Letitia Lawson, "U.S. Africa Policy Since the Cold War," *Strategic Insights*, 4, no. 1 (January 2007).

<sup>9</sup> "Congo (DRC), 2008 Country Review," CountryWatch, Inc., Houston, Texas, <http://www.countrywatch.com/pdfs/reviews/B36934Q3.01b.pdf>, (accessed April 17, 2008).

<sup>10</sup> Michael W Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, "International Peacebuilding: A Theoretical and Quantitative Analysis," *The American Political Science Review* 94, no. 4 (December 1, 2000): 786, in ProQuest (accessed April 20, 2009).

<sup>11</sup> Stephen Ellis, "How to Rebuild Africa."

<sup>12</sup> Jeffrey Gettleman, "Across Africa, A Sense That U.S. Power Isn't So Super" *The New York Times*, 24 December 2006.

<sup>13</sup> Ibrahim Elbadawi and Nicholas Sambanis, "Why are there so many civil wars in Africa? Understanding and preventing violent conflict," *Journal of African Economies* 9, no. 3 (October 1, 2000): 253, in ProQuest (accessed April 29, 2009).

<sup>14</sup> Darren Kew, "Building Democracy in 21st Century Africa: Two Africa's, One Solution," *The Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations* 4, no. 1, Winter/Spring 2005): 150.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 151.

<sup>16</sup> Vines, et al., "Angola, Drivers of change: an overview," 16.

<sup>17</sup> Kew, 150

<sup>18</sup> "2008 Corruption Perceptions Index, Regional Highlights: Sub-Saharan Africa," *Transparency International*, [www.transparency.org/content/download/36554/574724](http://www.transparency.org/content/download/36554/574724), (accessed May 07, 2009).

<sup>19</sup> Peter J Boettke, "Foundations of Entrepreneurship and Economic Development," Review of Foundations of Entrepreneurship and Economic Development, by David A Harper, *Cato Journal* 23, no. 2 (October 1, 2003): 344-347, in ProQuest (accessed May 01, 2009).

<sup>20</sup> George Klay Kieh Jr., "The Roots of the Second Liberian Civil War," *International Journal on World Peace*, 26, no. 1 (March 1, 2009): 17, in ProQuest (accessed April 29, 2009).

<sup>21</sup> Boubacar N'Diaye, "To 'midwife' – and abort – a democracy: Mauritania's transition from military rule 2005–2008," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 47, No. 01 (March 2009): Published online by Cambridge University Press, 18 Feb 2009, <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/search> (accessed April 20, 2009).

<sup>22</sup> Letitia Lawson, "The politics of anti-corruption reform in Africa," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 47, no. 01, (March 2009): 73, Published online by Cambridge University Press 18 February 2009, <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/search> (accessed April 20, 2009).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 91.

<sup>24</sup> Odd-Helge Fjeldstad and Mick Moore, "Revenue authorities and public authority in sub-Saharan Africa," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 47, no. 01 (March 2009): 2, Published online by Cambridge University Press 18 Feb 2009, <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/search> (accessed April 20, 2009).

<sup>25</sup> Séverine Autesserre, "The Trouble With Congo: How Local Disputes Fuel Regional Conflict," *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 3 (May 1, 2008): in ProQuest (accessed January 11, 2009).

<sup>26</sup> Elbadawi and Sambanis, "Why are there so many civil wars in Africa? Understanding and preventing violent conflict," 259.

<sup>27</sup> Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "On economic causes of civil war," *Oxford Economic Papers* 50, no. 4 (October 1, 1998): 571, in ProQuest (accessed May 6, 2009).

<sup>28</sup> Elbadawi and Sambanis, "Why are there so many civil wars in Africa? Understanding and preventing violent conflict," 254.

<sup>29</sup> Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, "The Strategy of Protracted People's War: Uganda," *Military Review* (November-December 2008): 5, [http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview\\_20081231\\_art005.pdf](http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20081231_art005.pdf) (accessed April 18, 2009).

<sup>30</sup> Séverine Autesserre, "Hobbes and the Congo: Frames, Local Violence, and International Intervention," *International Organization* 63, linked from the Columbia University Séverine Autesserre Home Page at "Research," <http://www.columbia.edu/~sa435/> (accessed April 20, 2009).

<sup>31</sup> Bercovitch, "Managing Internationalized Ethnic Conflict," 58.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Autesserre, "The Trouble With Congo: How Local Disputes Fuel Regional Conflict," 3.

<sup>34</sup> Bercovitch, "Managing Internationalized Ethnic Conflict," 62

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 64.

<sup>36</sup> Doyle and Sambanis, "International Peacebuilding: A Theoretical and Quantitative Analysis," 781.

<sup>37</sup> Nicholas Sambanis, "Short- and Long-Term Effects of United Nations Peace Operations," *The World Bank Economic Review* 22, no. 1, January 31, 2008, 17, <http://wber.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/22/1/9> (accessed April 20, 2009).

- <sup>38</sup> Autesserre, "The Trouble With Congo: How Local Disputes Fuel Regional Conflict," 2.
- <sup>39</sup> Christian Webersik, "Wars over Resources? Evidence from Somalia," *Environment*, 50, no. 3, (May/June 2008): 49, Heldref Publications, Washington D.C.
- <sup>40</sup> Autesserre, "The Trouble With Congo: How Local Disputes Fuel Regional Conflict," 2.
- <sup>41</sup> Séverine Autesserre, "Peacetime Violence, Post-Conflict Violence and Peace-building Strategies," linked from the *Columbia University Séverine Autesserre Home* page at "Research," <http://www.columbia.edu/~sa435/> (accessed April 20, 2009).
- <sup>42</sup> "Sub-Saharan Africa," linked from the *Transparency International Home Page* at "regional pages," at "Africa and the Middle East Department," at "Sub-Saharan Africa," <http://www.transparency.org/> (accessed April 17, 2009).
- <sup>43</sup> Peter J. Boettke, et al., "The Political, Economic, and Social Aspects of Katrina," *Southern Economic Journal* 74, no. 2 (October 1, 2007): 367, in ProQuest (accessed May 01, 2009).
- <sup>44</sup> Ibrahim Elbadawi and Nicholas Sambanis, "Why are there so many civil wars in Africa? Understanding and preventing violent conflict," 253.
- <sup>45</sup> Sambanis, "Short- and Long-Term Effects of United Nations Peace Operations," 13.
- <sup>46</sup> Collier and Hoeffler, "On economic causes of civil war," 569.
- <sup>47</sup> Elbadawi and Sambanis, "Why are there so many civil wars in Africa? Understanding and preventing violent conflict," 245.
- <sup>48</sup> Brian Athow and Robert G Blanton, "Colonial style and colonial legacies: Trade patterns in British and French Africa," *Journal of Third World Studies* 19, no. 2 (October 1, 2002): 220, in ProQuest (accessed May 9, 2009).
- <sup>49</sup> Ralph A. Austen, "Africa and globalization: colonialism, decolonization and the postcolonial malaise," *Journal of Global History* 1, no. 3 (November 1, 2006): 408, in ProQuest (accessed May 9, 2009).
- <sup>50</sup> "FACT SHEETS: Agriculture and Poverty in Developing Countries," *International Food Policy Research Institute*, <http://www.ifpri.cgiar.org/media/HongKong/HKallfs.pdf> (accessed May 9, 2009).
- <sup>51</sup> Collier and Hoeffler, "On economic causes of civil war," 571.
- <sup>52</sup> Elbadawi and Sambanis, "Why are there so many civil wars in Africa? Understanding and preventing violent conflict," 254.
- <sup>53</sup> Jane's Intelligence Review, "The \$100 question - Security implications of rising oil prices," January 9, 2008, <http://search.janes.com.ezproxy.usawcpubs.org/Search/advSearchResults.do?resultsCurrPage=3> (accessed April 20, 2009).

<sup>54</sup> Global Monitoring Report 2008, MDGs and the Environment: Agenda for Inclusive and Sustainable Development, *The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank* (2008): 28, [www.worldbank.org/gmr2008](http://www.worldbank.org/gmr2008) (accessed May 8, 2009).

<sup>55</sup> Peter J. Boettke, et al., "The Political, Economic, and Social Aspects of Katrina," 367.

<sup>56</sup> Christian Webersik, "Wars over Resources? Evidence from Somalia," 52.

<sup>57</sup> Peter J. Boettke, et al., "The Political, Economic, and Social Aspects of Katrina," 369.

<sup>58</sup> Kaplan, "Fixing Fragile States," 76.

<sup>59</sup> Global Monitoring Report 2008, MDGs and the Environment: Agenda for Inclusive and Sustainable Development, 40.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>61</sup> Elbadawi and Sambanis, "Why are there so many civil wars in Africa? Understanding and preventing violent conflict," 245.

<sup>62</sup> Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, *The Strategy of Protracted People's War: Uganda*, 11.

<sup>63</sup> Global Monitoring Report 2008, MDGs and the Environment: Agenda for Inclusive and Sustainable Development, 39.

<sup>64</sup> Jane's Intelligence Review, "The \$100 question - Security implications of rising oil prices."

<sup>65</sup> "Strategic Plan of the African Union Commission, Volume 1: Vision and Mission of the African Union," *African Union Commission* (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, African Union, May 2004): 13 available from [http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/AboutAu/vision\\_mission.htm](http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/AboutAu/vision_mission.htm), accessed 27 April 2008.

<sup>66</sup> "AFRICA: Food crisis worsens Horn of Africa security," *OxResearch* (August 13, 2008): 1, in ProQuest (accessed January 18, 2009).

<sup>67</sup> Kaplan, "Fixing Fragile States," 152.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 72.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 72.

<sup>70</sup> "International: 'Ethnicity' undermines global stability," *OxResearch* (March 28, 2008): 1, in ProQuest (accessed January 19, 2009).

<sup>71</sup> Séverine Autesserre, "Hobbes and the Congo: Frames, Local Violence, and International Intervention," 250.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 256.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 260.

<sup>74</sup> Séverine Autesserre, "Hobbes and the Congo: Frames, Local Violence, and International Intervention," 262-263.

<sup>75</sup> Doyle and Sambanis, "International Peacebuilding: A Theoretical and Quantitative Analysis," 779.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 780.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 781.

<sup>79</sup> "USAID Primer: What We Do and How We Do It," *U.S. Agency for International Development*, [http://www.usaid.gov/about\\_usaid/](http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/), (accessed May 9, 2009).

<sup>80</sup> George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: The White House, March 16, 2006), 37.

